

# Media Dojo Tear Sheet

## Playfish

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<http://www.playfish.com>

**Summary:** Playfish is one of the world's largest and fastest growing social games companies. The company's games target friends who want to play together over social and mobile platforms such as Facebook, MySpace, Google, Bebo, iPhone and Android. Each of the company's nine games has been a top 10 hit on Facebook, including Pet Society, which is the platform's most popular game played by 11 million + people every month. Playfish has offices in London, San Francisco, Beijing and Tromso, Norway.

**The Problem Being Attacked:** The games industry is in the midst of a well documented problem with its business model. The cost of producing a top tier console/PC game goes up while the addressable market of people willing to shell out \$50 a pop shrinks just as fast. Social games attempt to jump out of this problem by making gameplay part of a bigger social behavior that's monetized differently.

**The Approach to the Problem:** Playfish focuses the gaming value proposition away from selling copies of a game title and instead focuses on the social interaction among friends via a game. The company looks to Facebook and other social networks as the platform for its games rather than the gaming console or PC makers. The business model is based on in-game micro-transactions (e.g. buying accessories for characters) as well as in-game advertising.

**Customer Base:** Since launch in October 2007, Playfish has distributed over 100 million games via the Internet and social networks. Its monthly active user base is around 40 million people. Daily access to Playfish games is around 9 million users. The geographic spread is global. The portfolio consists of 9 games, many of which are based around some kind challenge for a group of friends or peers.

**Ownership:** private with main investment from Accel Partners and Index Ventures. Latest B Round for \$17 million in October 2008.

**Unique Point:** Playfish is attempting a new business model for gaming in which the game is a service rather than a product. The company assumes its users will access Playfish games in a similar manner as they access any other cloud service such as Gmail. Additionally, Playfish games often keep the same session even if the user toggles between a PC and a mobile client to access the service. Indeed, mobile takes a prominent position. Playfish launched iPhone and iPod Touch versions of its most popular game, "Who has the Biggest Brain" at the South by Southwest Festival in March 2009.

**Cloud Angle:** Playfish is 100% based in the cloud. The company's staff basically operates on laptops. Playfish uses the full suite of AWS products (S3, EC2) and is one of the largest users of AWS Cloud Front. The last element is important for shipping large Flash files around the fixed and mobile Internets for people to access and play the games.